DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 039 497 AC 008 107

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TITLE A Study to Determine Why Missouri Extension Youth Agents Resign or Change to Another Position within the Extension Division.
INSTITUTION Missouri Univ., Columbia. Extension Div.
PUB DATE Apr 70
NOTE 50p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$2.60
DESCRIPTORS *Extension Agents, *Interagency Cooperation, *Job Satisfaction, Low Motivation, Questionnaires, *Role Conflict, Socioeconomic Influences, Surveys, *Youth Leaders
IDENTIFIERS *Cooperative Extension Service, Missouri

ABSTRACT

A survey study to determine why Missouri Extension Youth Agents resigned or changed positions within the Extension Division revealed that while no single factor was responsible, there were a number of factors or reasons why this occurred. Among them were the following: (1) poor understanding of the duties and responsibilities of a youth agent at the time they were employed; (2) the youth position was regarded as a stepping stone to other extension positions; (3) dissatisfaction with (a) the leadership and program support received from the state youth staff, (b) the salary received, and (c) failure of formal education to provide the academic background needed for the job; (4) working in an area of the state in which they did not desire to live; (5) low prestige of the position; and (6) the feeling that their opinions had little or no affect on policy decisions by either the extension administration or the state youth department. The questionnaire employed in the survey is appended. (DM)

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ED039497

A STUDY TO DETERMINE WHY MISSOURI EXTENSION YOUTH AGENTS RESIGN OR CHANGE TO ANOTHER POSITION WITHIN THE EXTENSION DIVISION

A REPORT

PRESENTED TO

THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTENSION EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI, COLUMBIA

IN FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

FOR A SPECIAL PROBLEM

EXTENSION EDUCATION 400

BY

DON HENDERSON

APRIL 1970

AC 008 107

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to give special recognition and to express his appreciation to the following for their help and support.

Sincere thanks go to Dr. John Gross, chairman of this writers graduate committee, Dr. Randall Price, chairman of the University of Missouri Extension Education Department, and Dr. Joel Hartman, Professor of Rural Sociology, who were members of the graduate committee.

Thanks also go to the following University of Missouri Extension Division personnel: Dr. Mary Nell Greenwood, Director of Continuing Education for Women; Dr. Carl Scheneman, Director Administrative Management; Dean Fitzgerald, Personnel Officer; Miss Louise Whitesides, Administrative Assistant Personnel; Frank Graham, Director State Youth Program; and Miss Charline Lindsay, Youth Specialist.

Sincere thanks go to the former extension youth agents who provided information for this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A STUDY TO DETERMINE WHY MISSOURI EXTENSION YOUTH AGENTS RESIGN OR CHANGE TO ANOTHER POSITION WITHIN THE EXTENSION DIVISION.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

According to figures recently compiles by Dean Fitzgerald, Personnel Officer for the University of Missouri Extension Division, the employment turnover is higher among youth agents than in any of the other field staff positions.

A total of twenty-three youth agents resigned and an additional thirty-one youth agents changed to another position within the extension division during the past five years (January 1965 - December 1969).

Employment turnover percentages range from as high as 50 percent in one extension district to as low as 0 percent in another district during the same year.

In looking at the figures over this five year period no definite pattern can be established to indicate that the employment turnover may be more of a problem in one section of the state than it is in another section. No extension district in the state appears to be exempt from this turnover problem. It is true that a number of the youth agents are very stable and have remained in a given county many years, but at the same time other counties have had three, four, or even five youth agents during this five year period.

By the very nature of this job it has proven very difficult for a youth agent to record much in the way of accomplishments during his or her first year of employment.

According to figures provided by Dr. Carl Scheneman, Director of Administrative Management for the University of Missouri Extension Division, it costs approximately $15,500 per year to finance each youth agent. In addition it costs approximately $3,500 for a three month orientation training program that is required when a new agent is hired.

Assuming that a new youth agent is relatively unproductive during his first year of employment, by adding the new agent training costs and the costs of financing that agent for a year, one can see that from a financial standpoint alone employment turnover is a definite problem.

In addition to this financial loss there is also a problem of having a less than desirable youth program carried out in the counties where the agent turnover occurs.

Considering that the Missouri Extension Division has a 17 percent turnover in youth agents each year, it clearly shows that this is a definite problem and one that needs a great deal of attention if the extension youth program is going to function at its maximum potential.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

During the past five years (January 1965 - December 1969) fifty-four extension youth agents have either resigned or changed to another position within the extension division. This figure, plus deaths, resignations and terminations, represents a 17 percent average annual turn-

over of youth agents working throughout Missouri.

The primary purpose of this study was to determine why these extension youth agents resigned or changed to another position within the extension division.

This study should provide some insight on how the Missouri extension division can improve its operational unit in an effort to solve the problem of a high employment turnover of extension youth agents.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this study were to determine:

-- The degree of satisfaction the respondents had relative to:

a) guidance they received from their county or area director
b) advice and program support they received from their county or area director
c) assistance and support they received from other agents within their county or area
d) their co-workers
e) administrative support they received from their district director
f) leadership provided by the state youth department
g) salary they received
h) amount of leisure time they had
i) program assistance they received from the state youth staff
j) working relationships with their county or area director and the other agents in their county or area
k) amount of routine tasks they were expected to perform

-- Were the respondents employed in the area of the state in which they desired to be located?

-- The respondent's feelings toward the youth agent's position itself.

-- Did the employment officer properly explain the duties and responsibilities of a youth agent to new youth employees?

-- Did the college education the respondents received provide them with the academic background needed to effectively serve as an extension youth agent?

-- Prestige the position carries.

-- What were the primary determining factors that causes the extension youth agent to resign or change to another position within the extension division?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A review of the literature relating to the problem of employment turnover reveals that many studies have been conducted on what the employees like and dislike about their job, but few studies have been conducted with former employees to determine why they resigned.

Many studies have been conducted and much has been printed relative to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In reviewing these studies this investigator concluded that the reasons why a person is dissatisfied with his job are many and usually it is a combination of things that causes a person to resign from his job.

> Indeed, there may be no such thing as job satisfaction independent of the other satisfactions in one's life. Family relationships, health, relative social status in the community, and a multitude of other factors may be just as important as the job itself in determining what we choose to call job satisfaction. A person may be satisfied with one aspect of his job and dissatisfied with another. Satisfactions may be rationalized, and the degree of satisfaction may vary from day to day. A person may never be wholly satisfied.[1]

Most of the studies and printed material reviewed indicates what present employees like and dislike about their job.

In this study of former extension youth agents the investigator attempted to determine what these workers disliked about their jobs, but what combination of these dissatisfiers caused them to resign or change jobs.

THEORTICAL FRAMEWORK:

In reviewing a number of studies relating to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction this investigator concluded that the reasons why a person is dissatisfied with his job are many and usually it is a combination of things that cuases a person to resign from his job.

Herzberg in his study, The Motivation To Work, states "job satisfiers cannot be obtained merely by removing job dissatisfiers. Removal of dissatisfiers makes the employee no longer dissatisfied, but it does not necessarily make him satisfied."[2]

Denzil Clegg in his study, The Motivation of County Administrators in the Cooperative Extension Service, determined that frequently job satisfaction is associated with one factor while job dissatisfaction is associated with several factors.[3]

Fred Haglestein in his study of Job Attitudes of County Extension Personnel in Oregon asked the youth agents what they liked best and what they least liked about their job.[4] Reasons most often given for liking the job were:

-- working with people
-- freedom in the job
-- achievement
-- variety of work
-- challenge and opportunity
-- staff and clientele relations

Reasons most often given for disliking the job were:

-- hours they were expected to work (night and week-end work)
-- being spread too thin
-- lack of prestige of the job
-- they preferred to work in another area of the state

Based on these previous research findings, this investigator hypothesized that there is no single factor that caused these extension youth agents to resign or change jobs. In reality there was a combination of factors all of which contributed to the youth agents' ultimate decision to change jobs.

METHODOLOGY:

Upon investigation it was found that fifty-four youth agents had resigned or changed to another position during the past five years. Since this number is quite small, it was determined that the best method of acquiring the needed information would be to question each of the former youth agents relative to their reason(s) for changing jobs.

All of the fifty-four former employees who resigned or changed jobs between 1965 and 1970 were surveyed in this study.

SURVEY TECHNIQUES:

A complete examination of the extension division personnel files revealed the names of these fifty-four former youth agents. It was quickly determined that the last known address of most of these employees was out-of-date.

After obtaining current addresses this investigator found that these former youth agents are presently scattered throughout six states from Nebraska to Texas.

With this wide geographic distribution it was determined that a mail return questionnaire would be used to obtain the needed information.

This questionnaire was mailed to the former youth agents, along with full instructions on how to correctly fill it out. A self-addressed, stamped return envelope was enclosed with the questionnaire. Follow-up cards were sent as required in an effort to obtain a high return percentage on the survey.

VARIABLES:

In the development of the survey questionnaire this investigator considered the variables related to this study. The following diagram shows these variables and the relationships between them.

(independent variable)	(intervening variables)	(dependent variables)
Employment conditions	Job prestige Salary Long working hours Job location Leadership support Job opportunity Administrative support Job expectations Relationship with co-workers	Job satisfaction

Employment conditions (independent variables) when supported by positive intervening variables will result in job satisfaction (dependent variable). When the employment conditions and the above intervening variables are negative, job dissatisfaction will result and consequently the employees may resign or change positions.

In this study the investigator sought to determine in what way and to what degree these intervening conditions affected the employee's decision to resign or change positions.

The information obtained shows the relationship(s) between the variables. That is, what independent and intervening variables caused the dependent variables to exist.

HOW THE SURVEY INFORMATION WAS USED:

Copies of this study were presented to the Vice President for Extension and the Department of Extension Education. Copies were also presented to the Extension Youth Department.

It is the sincere hopes of this investigator that the information contained in this study will be helpful in developing ways to decrease the employment turnover among youth agents in future years.

CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Fifty-four survey questionnaires were mailed to former extension youth agents. Fifty of these questionnaires were returned. All fifty of the questionnaires returned were completely filled out and in usable form. The following data were taken from these fifty questionnaires.

This study involved the surveying of two groups: extension youth agents who had resigned and taken employment outside the extension division and extension youth agents who had changed to another position within the extension division.

Definitions: For reasons of briefness and convenience we will refer to the agents who resigned as "Group A". The agents who changed to another position within the extension division will be referred to as "Group B".

Survey questionnaires were sent to twenty-three persons in "Group A". Nineteen of these questionnaires were returned (83% return). Questionnaires were mailed to thirty-one persons in "Group B". All thirty-one of these were returned (100% return).

TENURE = Years of continuous service in a given position or job.

PRESTIGE = The command of esteem or admiration. The ability to influence others without force.

AGE OF RESPONDENTS WHEN THEY LEFT EXTENSION YOUTH WORK

TABLE I

GROUP A (resigned)			GROUP B (changed positions)		
Age	Number	Percent	Age	Number	Percent
Under 25	0	0	Under 25	4	12
25 - 29	12	63	25 - 29	8	26
30 - 34	2	10	30 - 34	6	20
35 or over	5	27	35 or over	13	42
Total	19	100	Total	31	100

No definite conclusions were meant to be drawn from this table, but there is an indication that those persons in Group A tended to leave extension youth work at a younger age than did those in Group B. Slightly over 60 percent of Group A left youth work while they were yet under the age of 30. Slightly under 40 percent of Group B changed jobs before they were 30 years of age.

NUMBER OF YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT AS A YOUTH AGENT

TABLE II

GROUP A (resigned)			GROUP B (changed positions)		
Years	Number	Percent	Years	Number	Percent
Less than one year	1	5	Less than one year	0	0
1 year	6	33	1 year	6	20
2 years	7	37	2 years	9	29
3 years	1	5	3 years	6	20
4 years	1	5	4 years	1	3
5 years	0	0	5 years	4	13
6 years	1	5	6 years	1	3
7 years	0	0	7 years	2	6
8 years	1	5	8 years	0	0
9 years	0	0	9 years	1	3
10 or more years	1	5	10 or more years	1	3
Total	19	100	Total	31	100

Data in this table indicate that the persons in Group A had considerably less tenure as a youth agent than did those persons in Group B.

Seventy-four percent of the respondents in Group A served only two years or less as a youth agent. Only forty-eight percent of the respondents in Group B served two years or less as a youth agent.

Considering both groups as a whole, the median average tenure of these former youth agents was quite low. Well over one half of the respondents changed jobs within their first two years of employment as a youth agent.

YOUTH AGENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR JOB

TABLE III

When asked the question, "When you were first employed as a youth agent, did you feel the duties and responsibilities of the position were properly described to you?", the following responses were given.

GROUP A (resigned)				GROUP B (changed positions)			
Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Yes	Percent	No	Percent
12	63	7	27	15	49	16	51

The figures in this table indicate that while there were no great differences between the responses given by the two groups, there was a significant number in each group who felt the job was not properly described to them. Nearly one half of the former youth agents had a poor understanding of the duties and responsibilities of a youth agent at the time they were first employed.

The most frequent explanation given by those answering negatively were:

-- The total youth concept of extension work was stressed too much--it wasn't that way in the county.

-- They were told they would do youth work, but in reality they were expected to do primarily 4-H work.

-- The state youth staff and state administrators told them to do youth work, while their county director expected them to do only 4-H work.

It is evident that there was a considerable amount of misunderstanding among these youth agents as to what actually were their duties and responsibilities.

It is also apparent at least in the minds of the youth agents that there was some differences of opinion between administration and the state youth staff about these duties and responsibilities. There was a lack of clear understanding of what was expected of the youth agents relative to their job.

WORKING PREFERENCE WHEN FIRST EMPLOYED

TABLE IV

In answer to the question, "When you were first employed as a youth agent would you rather have been working in another position within extension?", the following responses were given:

GROUP A (resigned)				GROUP B (changed positions)			
Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Yes	Percent	No	Percent
5	26	14	74	16	52	15	48

The figures on this table may have a significant bearing on why these former youth agents changed jobs.

Nearly 25 percent of the respondents of Group A indicated they would rather have been working in another position in extension. Fifty-two percent of Group B indicated at the time they were first employed they would rather have held another position within extension.

Considering the two groups as a whole, the figures indicate 42 percent of these former youth agents desired another position when they were first employed.

It is quite obvious that if they prefer another position the agents will change jobs as soon as the opportunity presents itself. If these agents are not given the opportunity to change positions, they may resign. This is perhaps what caused some of these former youth agents to resign.

STATUS OF THE YOUTH POSITION

TABLE V

The following responses were given in answer to the question, "When you were first employed as a youth agent did you feel that the position was a stepping stone to other positions within extension?".

GROUP A (resigned)				GROUP B (changed positions)			
Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Yes	Percent	No	Percent
11	58	8	42	18	58	13	42

While there is no significant difference in the responses of the two groups, the figures do indicate that well over half of the former youth agents did feel the youth position was a stepping stone to other positions.

These figures support the information contained in the previous table (Table IV). The figures indicate that well over half of the youth agents wanted a different position at the time they were employed and approximately the same number felt the youth agents' position was a stepping stone.

This situation definitely could have a contributing factor to the agents' decision to change jobs.

JOB SATISFACTION

TABLE VI

The former youth agents were asked about their feelings toward various segments of their job. They were asked to indicate their feelings on a scale from very unsatisfactory to very satisfactory. The scale offered the following choices:

1 = very unsatisfactory
2 = unsatisfactory
3 = undecided
4 = satisfactory
5 = very satisfactory

Each response was given an arithmetic value. A response of "very unsatisfactory" received a score of one; "unsatisfactory" a score of two; "undecided" a score of three; "satisfactory" a score of four; and "very satisfactory" received a score of five.

The following data shows the average score placed on each of the following, based upon numbers given by the respondent.

STATEMENT	GROUP A (resigned) Average Response	GROUP B (changed jobs) Average Response
1. The program guidance they received from their county or area director.	3.58	3.77
2. Administrative support they received from their county or area director.	3.79	4.16
3. Program assistance they received from other agents within their county or area.	4.42	4.13
4. Were co-workers considered as personal friends?	4.20	4.35

5. Administrative support received from their district director.	3.31	4.06
6. Leadership by the state youth center.	2.37	2.87
7. Salary they received.	3.16	2.65
8. Amount of leisure time they had.	2.84	2.42
9. Program support received from the state youth staff.	2.32	2.55
10. Working relationships with their county or area director.	3.89	4.19
11. Working relationships with other agents in their county or area.	3.89	4.19
12. Amount of routine tasks to perform.	3.21	3.48

Considering each of the statements individually, the following conclusions were drawn:

-- The respondents in both groups stated the guidance they received from their county or area director was satisfactory.

-- In relation to the administrative support they received from their county or area director Group A stated their feelings to be slightly below satisfactory, while Group B indicated a satisfactory feeling.

-- Both groups indicated they were satisfied with the program assistance they received from their co-workers and that they did consider them personal friends.

-- Group A was undecided about the administrative support they received from their district director, while Group B was satisfied with the support they received.

-- Both groups indicated the leadership provided by the state youth staff was unsatisfactory.

-- Group A indicated they were undecided about their satisfaction relative to the salary they received, while Group B was definitely dissatisfied with the salary they were receiving.

-- Both groups were dissatisfied with the amount of leisure or family time they had.

-- Both groups were dissatisfied with the program assistance they received from the state youth staff.

-- Both groups indicated they were satisfied with their working relationship with their county or area director and their co-workers.

-- Both groups were somewhat undecided about their satisfaction relative to the amount of routine tasks they were required to perform.

As might be expected Group A (group that resigned) was somewhat less satisfied with most of the various segments of their job than was Group B (group that changed to another position).

The significant points to consider relative to the former youth agents' job satisfaction dwell in parts 6, 7, 8, and 9.

The respondents expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction with the leadership and program assistance provided by the state youth staff. It should be recognized that this appears to be a definite problem, but with this limited amount of research information it is impossible to identify the cause of the problem. This indicated lack of leadership provided by the state youth staff may be due to some fault of the state youth staff or it may be due to a misunderstanding between the youth agent and the state youth staff as to what is the role of the state youth staff.

The respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the salary they received. This investigator realizes that while the respondents indicated

they were dissatisfied with their salary, it does not mean that this directly caused any of the youth agents to resign or change jobs because the youth agents who did not resign or change jobs may also have been dissatisfied with their salary.

The important thing to consider is that even if the former youth agents were paid equally with other extension agents, if they felt they were underpaid, that may have influenced their decision to resign or change positions.

The respondents also indicated they were dissatisfied with the amount of leisure or family time they had. Again this probably is just a contributing factor relative to their decision to change jobs, because other agents may also feel they are required to work too many hours at night and on week-ends.

In summarizing the respondents' feelings relative to the various aspects of their job, they were generally satisfied with the following exceptions: the leadership and program support provided by the state youth department, the salary they received, and the amount of leisure time they had.

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND NEEDED BY YOUTH AGENTS

TABLE VII

The following responses were given in answer to the question, "Did you think your college education provided you the academic background needed to effectively serve as an extension youth agent?".

GROUP A (resigned)				GROUP B (changed positions)			
Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Yes	Percent	No	Percent
9	47	10	53	20	64	11	36

Considering both the groups together nearly one half of the respondents felt their formal education did not provide the academic background needed for the job. A much larger percentage of the respondents in Groups A felt they did not have the proper educational background for the job. This, too, may have been a contributing factor to their decision to resign.

When asked what type of courses or experiences would have been helpful, the following responses were most frequently given:

1. Courses in Sociology.
2. Courses in Psychology.
3. Human relations and human development courses.
4. Agent needs to have a rural background to work in rural areas.
5. Need more training experience with effective youth agents.

EFFECT OF LOCATION ON TENURE OF YOUTH AGENTS

TABLE VIII

When asked the question, "When you were first employed as a youth agent were you working in the area of the state in which you wanted to live?", the following responses were given.

GROUP A (resigned)				GROUP B (changed positions)			
Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Yes	Percent	No	Percent
9	48	10	52	19	61	12	39

These figures indicate that slightly under one half of the former youth agents were placed in an area of the state where they did not desire to live. From comments written to this question it is apparent that this was definitely one of the contributing factors that caused several of the youth agents to resign. This would infer that extension administrators need to attempt to do a better job of placing new employees in the area of the state in which they want to live.

There is a great deal of variation in living conditions and environment in various parts of Missouri. Many times it is difficult for a person who has grown up in Southern Missouri to adjust to living in North Missouri or vice-versa. Perhaps more consideration could be given to preference of location.

Frequent moving from one location to another not only causes job dissatisfaction, but it also causes interruptions in program effectiveness.

PRESTIGE OF EXTENSION POSITIONS

TABLE IX

In an effort to determine the respondents' feeling toward prestige of the youth agents' job they were asked to rank extension positions on the basis of paired comparisons. Ranking the positions by method of paired comparisons allowed the investigator to list the position categories in order on a psychological continuum.

Each position was paired with each of the other positions in such a way that all possible combinations of positions were presented. The respondents were asked to indicate in each combination which position they felt carried the most prestige.

The responses were scored by giving each positive response a score of two points and each response that indicated no difference in prestige of the pair received a score of one point.

Data in the following table indicate how the position ranked according to the respondents' answers.

	GROUP A		GROUP B	
	Position	Score	Position	Score
1st.	Director	131	Director	209
2nd.	Agriculture	80	Community Development	141
3rd.	Youth	65	Agriculture	128
4th.	Community Development	60	Home Economics	75
5th.	Home Economics	43	Youth	57

As is indicated the two groups felt differently about the prestige of the positions thus the ranking was different, but the significant point is that both groups ranked the youth position quite low. The figures do indicate that Group A (those who resigned) felt the youth position carried more prestige than did Group B. This indicates that Group A may not have been as dissatisfied with the youth agents' job itself as much as they were with extension in general.

Group B ranked the youth agents' position at the lowest level of prestige. This indicates that they were more dissatisfied with the youth position than extension in general.

There are some apparent biases in the ranking of these positions.

1. Several of the respondents in Group B changed to a community development position. Therefore, they would naturally rank it higher than those in Group A.

2. At the time many of the respondents in Group A resigned, community development was relatively new in the state. Consequently many of the former youth agents were not acquainted with the position; therefore, they would tend to rank it lower as a result of unfamiliarity with the position.

3. There were very few females included in this group--consequently we would expect the men to rank the home economist position quite low.

This investigator believes that prestige is a big factor in an employee's satisfaction with his job. Therefore, the lack of prestige is a big contributing factor to cause youth agents to resign or change jobs.

YOUTH AGENTS AFFECT ON ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY DECISIONS

TABLE X

The respondents gave the following answers when asked the question, "When you were a youth agent did you think your opinion had any affect on policy decisions made by the administration?".

GROUP A (resigned)

Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Don't Remember	Percent
3	15	15	79	1	6

GROUP B (changed positions)

Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Don't Remember	Percent
12	38	18	58	1	4

A significantly higher percentage (79%) of the respondents in Group A felt their opinion had little or no affect on policy decisions made by the administration. Slightly under 60 percent of Group B also answered the question in the affirmative.

This means that 2/3 of the former youth agents felt their opinions had no affect on policy decisions made by administration. While this may not have caused any of the youth agents to resign, it certainly could have contributed to their overall job dissatisfaction.

YOUTH AGENTS' INFLUENCE ON PROGRAM DECISIONS OF THE YOUTH DEPARTMENT

TABLE XI

The following answers were given in response to the question, "When you were a youth agent did you think your opinions had any affect on program decisions made by the youth department?".

GROUP A (resigned)				GROUP B (changed positions)			
Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Yes	Percent	No	Percent
8	42	11	58	10	32	21	68

Figures in this table indicate that nearly 2/3 of the respondents felt their opinion had little or no affect on youth department decisions.

Feeling that ones opinion has some worth can contribute substantially to his overall job satisfaction.

It is doubtful that this caused any of the youth agents to change jobs, but it apparently did contribute to the job dissatisfaction of many of these former youth agents.

INFLUENCE OF PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE

TABLE XII

The following responses were given in answer to the question, "Did you think your previous work experience influenced your decision to leave the youth position?".

GROUP A (resigned)				GROUP B (changed positions)			
Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Yes	Percent	No	Percent
8	42	11	58	17	55	14	45

While the responses to this question were fairly evenly split, from the explanation given it would appear that their previous work experience may very well have had an effect on some of the agents' decisions to change jobs.

Fifty percent of the former youth agents state that their previous work experience did affect their decision to change jobs.

The following were the most frequent responses given by those who answered this question affirmatively:

-- Education and experience in the agricultural field caused me to want to work in an agricultural job.

-- Desired to work with adults and not youth.

-- Structure of classroom teaching quite different from extension youth work.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO RESIGNATION OR CHANGE OF POSITION

TABLE XIII

The respondents were asked to indicate the three most important reasons that caused them to resign or change jobs. A wide variety of reasons were given by each of the two groups. Many of the responses were closely related so they were grouped for tabulation purposes.

The following were the most often listed reasons why the respondents in Group A resigned. The responses are listed in the order they were most often reported. The number of responses are indicated in parentheses.

-- Salary too low in relation to their personal goals. (9)

-- Salary too low considering the amount of work they were expected to perform. (8)

-- Lack of prestige of the job. (9)

-- Required to work too many evenings and too long hours. (6)

-- Pressure to move to another county. (5)

-- Too much emphasis on total youth and not enough assistance on how to do total youth work. (5)

-- Working in an area of the state where they did not wish to live. (4)

-- Too much time required on routine 4-H activities. Not enough time for planning and program development. (4)

-- Lack of vision by the state youth staff. (3)

-- Loss of personal contact due to area work. They felt they were spread too thin. (2)

The following were the most often listed reasons why the respondents in Groups B changed positions. The responses are listed in the order in which they were most often mentioned:

-- They changed to the job they wanted in the first place. (14)

-- Salary in relation to that of co-workers was too low. (12)

-- Lack of opportunity for advancement. (9)

-- Lack of job challenge or satisfaction. (9)

-- Lack of leadership and direction from state youth staff. (8)

-- Required to work too many evenings and too long hours. (7)

-- Lack of prestige of the job. (5)

-- Located in an area of the state where they didn't want to live. (5)

-- New job provided a better opportunity to continue education. (3)

-- Required to do too much routine 4-H work. (3)

-- Lack of communication with district director. (3)

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

STATEMENT:

During the past five years (January 1965 - December 1969) fifty-four extension youth agents resigned or changed to another position within the extension division. This figure, plus death, retirements, and terminations, represents a 17 percent average annual turnover of youth agents working throughout Missouri.

According to figures provided by Dr. Carl Scheneman, Director of Administrative Management for the University of Missouri Extension Division, it costs approximately $15,500 per year to finance a youth agent. In addition it costs approximately $3,500 for a three month orientation training program that is required when a new agent is employed.

Assuming that a new youth agent is relatively unproductive during his first year of employment, by adding the new agent training costs and the costs of financing that agent for a year, one can see that from a financial standpoint alone employment turnover is a definite problem.

In addition to this financial loss there is also a problem of having a less than desirable youth program carried out in the counties where the agent turnover occurs.

Considering that the Missouri Extension Division has a 17 percent turnover in youth agents each year, it is quite evident that this is a definite problem and one that needs a great deal of attention if the extension youth program is going to function at its maximum potential.

The primary purpose of this study was to determine what factors caused these extension youth agents to resign or change to another position within the extension division.

The findings presented in this study are based on information received in a survey completed in March 1970. A mail return questionnaire was sent to all fifty-four of these former extension youth agents (those who resigned or changed to another position in extension during the past five years). Questionnaires were sent to twenty-three former youth agents who had resigned. Nineteen of these questionnaires were returned (83%). Questionnaires were sent to thirty-one former youth agents who had changed to another position in extension. All thirty-one of these questionnaires were returned (100%). In total this represents 93 percent of the sample included in the survey.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

1. Nearly one half (48%) of these former agents resigned or changed positions before they reached age thirty.

2. Nearly three-fourths (72%) of the youth agents resigned or changed positions with only three years or less experience in the job.

3. Nearly one half of the respondents indicated they had a poor understanding of the duties and responsibilities of a youth agent at the time they were employed.

4. Forty-two percent of the respondents indicated they would rather have been working in another position in extension at the time they started to work as a youth agent.

5. Well over one half of the youth agents viewed the youth position as a stepping stone to other positions in extension.

6. The respondents indicated they were satisfied with the following:

   a) Program guidance, working relationship and administrative support they received from county or area director.

   b) Program assistance they received from other agents in their county or area.

   c) Administrative support they received from their district director.

   They were dissatisfied with:

   a) The leadership and program support they received from the state youth staff.

   b) Salary they received.

   c) Amount of nights and week-ends they were required to work.

7. Nearly one half of the respondents felt their formal education did not provide the academic background needed for the job.

8. Slightly over one half of the youth agents indicated they were working in an area of the state where they did not desire to live.

9. Indications by Group A (those who resigned) gave the followingrankings to extension positions according to prestige of the job:

   First = County or Area Director
   Second = Agriculture
   Third = Youth
   Fourth = Community Development
   Fifty = Home Economics

   Group B (those who changed positions) gave the following rankings according to prestige of the job:

   First = County or Area Director
   Second = Community Development
   Third = Agriculture
   Fourth = Home Economics
   Fifth = Youth

10. Two thirds (66%) of the respondents indicated that they felt their opinions had little or no affect on policy decisions made by the extension administration.

11. Nearly two thirds (64%) of the youth agents indicated that they felt their opinion had little or no affect on program decisions made by the state youth department.

12. Fifty percent of the respondents stated that their previous work experience did affect their decision to change jobs.

13. The respondents listed the following most frequently as reasons or factors that caused them to resign or change jobs.

Group A (those who resigned)

a) Salary too low in relation to their personal goals.

b) Salary too low considering the amount of work they felt they were expected to perform.

c) Lack of prestige of the job.

d) Required to work too many evenings and too long hours.

e) Pressure to move to another county.

f) Too much emphasis on total youth and not enough assistance on how to do total youth work.

g) They were working in an area of the state where they did not wish to live.

h) Too much time required on routine 4-H activities. Not enough time for planning and program development.

i) Lack of vision by the state youth staff.

j) Loss of personal contact due to area work. They felt they were spread too thin.

Group B (those who changed positions in extension)

a) Changed to the job they wanted in the first place.

b) Salary in relation to that of co-workers was too low.

c) Lack of opportunity for advancement.

d) Lack of job challenge or satisfaction.

e) Lack of leadership and direction from state youth staff.

f) Required to work too many evenings and too long hours.

g) Lack of prestige of the job.

h) Located in area of the state where they didn't want to live.

i) New job provided a better opportunity to continue their education.

j) Required to do too much routine 4-H work.

k) Lack of communication with district director.

CONCLUSIONS

This investigator concludes that no single factor or reason caused these youth agents to resign. In reality there were a number of factors all of which contributed to the agents' final decision to resign or change positions.

Certainly some of these factors weighed heavier than other in the ultimate decision. The implications these determining factors present are discussed in the following section.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are felt to be the major implications from the findings of this study:

1. Prestige of the job and how one looks at his occupation has a great deal of effect on the satisfaction or dissatisfaction he has for his work. If a person feels that his work contributes less to the overall program than his co-workers' job does, he is quite likely to be dissatisfied.

   The respondents in this study indicated they felt the position of a youth agent carried little prestige in relation to other extension positions. They indicated this when they were asked to rank the positions according to prestige and then again in an open end question relating to reasons for resigning or changing positions.

   Recommendation:

   That methods and techniques be developed that will add prestige and improve the image of the youth position in the eyes of the agents.

   If we expect to retain professional youth workers in the position of a youth agent, the position must command the services of a professional, not that of a trainee looking for a better opportunity.

2. The duties and responsibilities of a youth agent are many and varied. Many new employees never fully understand what is expected of them as a youth agent.

Nearly one half of the respondents in this study indicated their formal college courses had not provided them with the academic background needed for the job.

Approximately the same number of respondents also indicated they had a poor understanding of the duties and responsibilities of a youth agent when they were first employed. Because of this appropriate orientation training and in-service training must be provided for the new youth agents. The orientation and in-service training should be planned and designed to meet the needs of the individual. The new agent should spend a large portion of his orientation training period working with agents whose working conditions and problems are similar to those with which the new agent will be confronted. That is to say a youth agent who will be working in a rural area should receive a larger portion of this orientation training in rural areas.

Recommendations:

A) That the person in charge of new staff orientation work with the state youth staff and administrators to develop better methods of acquainting the new employees with their duties and responsibilities.

B) That a large portion of the orientation training be provided by agents working in areas and situations similar to what the new agent will experience.

C) That more specific and intensive in-service training be provided for agents with under three years' experience.

D) That after the new youth agents have been working in this assigned area for approximately one month they be given the opportunity to work one week with a successful youth agent in another part of the state.

3. From information received in this study there appears to be a lack of leadership and guidance provided by the state youth staff. Due to the indications that formal college course work does not provide the particular skills and knowledge required in extension youth work, new youth agents usually need some strong leadership and program guidance.

This leadership and guidance should come from the state youth staff. It appears that there is a great deal of misunderstanding and disagreement among the extension youth agents, the administrators, and the state youth staff relative to the function of the state youth department. As long as these misunderstandings and disagreements exist there will be some degree of job dissatisfaction among the staff at all levels. No person can serve two masters.

Recommendations:

That these misunderstandings and disagreements be discussed and resolved. It is further recommended that the state youth staff work with the youth agents to determine how the goals of the youth program can best be met.

Strong leadership provided by the state youth staff and a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of the youth department could greatly enhance the extension youth program and increase the tenure of extension youth agents.

4. Prior to the time that Missouri extension agents became specialized workers, they all started out as either home economists or as assistant county agents. The male agents then progressed to associate agents and finally to a county agent position. The assistant and associate agents usually gave leadership to the youth program. Thus, the youth program became a training ground for other positions.

From the information received in this study apparently some of this structure has carried over into our present system of staff placement.

Forty-two percent of the respondents in this study indicated they would rather have been working in another position in extension at the time they started to work as a youth agent. These figures point out the youth position is still being used as a stepping stone to other positions.

If an employee desires another position, no doubt he will change jobs the first time the opportunity presents itself.

If we ever expect to increase the tenure of extension youth agents, the youth position will have to be considered a desirable position and not a training ground for other positions.

Recommendations:

A) That the employment officer and administrators make a concerned effort to employ persons for youth positions that are interested in youth work and plan to make extension youth work their profession.

B) That the extension youth positions not be used as a training ground for other staff positions.

5. The place of one's residence has a big influence on job satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Slightly over one half of the respondents in this study indicated they were working in an area where they did not desire to live. Several of the respondents indicated that this was one of the primary factors that caused them to resign or change positions.

There is a great deal of variation in living conditions and environment in various parts of Missouri. Many times it is difficult for a person who has grown up in Southern Missouri to adjust to living in North Missouri or vice-versa. Persons with rural backgrounds sometimes find it difficult to adjust to urban or city living or vice-versa.

Usually if a person is unhappy with where he is living he will experience some dissatisfaction with his job.

Recommendations:

A) That more consideration be given to location preference in placement of new employees.

B) That determined effort be given to relocation of those employees who indicate dissatisfaction with where they are located.

Recommendation:

A) That further studies be conducted in the near future relating to extension youth agents and their role in a total extension program.

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APPENDIX

Missouri School of Religion
9th and Lowry Street
Room 38
Columbia, Missouri 65201

Dear Former Extension Youth Agent:

I would like to ask for a few minutes of your valuable time to assist me in a special study I am conducting.

In this special study I am attempting to determine why former extension youth agents resigned or changed to another position within the extension division.

Employment turnover has always ran quite high among extension youth agents and thus I feel it is important for us to find out why youth agents change jobs.

A questionnaire is being sent to all former youth agents who resigned or changed positions during the period from January 1965 through December 1969.

Within the next week you will receive a short questionnaire containing fourteen questions. The questionnaire is so designed that it will require only a few minutes to fill it out. I would urge you to please fill out the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible.

To make this study meaningful, I need a 100% return on the questionnaire. Your assistance on this study will certainly be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Don Henderson

P.S. Time for completing this study is short so I hope you will find a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire and return it within two or three days after you receive it.

D. H.

March 12, 1970
Columbia, Missouri 65201

Dear Former Extension Youth Agent:

Attached to this letter you will find a questionnaire dealing with "why extension youth agents resign or change to another position within the extension division".

As you will recall, I mentioned in the letter I sent you last week that I am conducting a study to determine why each year a relatively high percentage of our extension youth agents change jobs. Employment turnover is a problem to both the organization and the employee, therefore, I am asking for your assistance in hopes that solutions to this problem may be found.

Will you please take a few minutes right now and fill out this short questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-address, stamped envelope. This questionnaire is coded for tabulation purposes only. You may wish to sign the questionnaire, but your signature is not necessary. I assure you the information you provide will be kept in strict confidence.

The information will be summarized and presented for the group. Please answer the questions completely and as honestly as possible.

Perhaps you have found yourself in the same situation I am in. I am using this study as a part of the requirements for a Master's Degree so PLEASE HELP:::::::::::::QUICK:::::::::::::.

Sincerely,

Don Henderson

P.S. If you would like to have a copy of the summary of this study, please put your name and address on the questionnaire.

D. H.

A STUDY OF WHY EXTENSION YOUTH AGENTS RESIGN OR CHANGE TO ANOTHER POSITION WITHIN THE EXTENSION DIVISION

1. When you left extension youth work did you: (Check one)

   _____(a) take another position in extension.

   _____(b) go into some other type of work.

   If your answer is (b), what kind of work?_____

2. What was your age when you resigned or changed to another position within extension? _____

3. How long were you employed as a youth agent? _____Years _____Months

4. When you were first employed as a youth agent did you feel the duties and responsibilities of the position were properly described to you?

   Yes_____ No_____ Don't remember_____

   Explain_____

   _____

5. When you were first employed as a youth agent, would you rather have been working in another position within extension?

   Yes_____ No_____ Don't remember_____

6. When you were first employed as a youth agent did you feel that the position was a stepping stone to other positions within extension?

   Yes_____ No_____ Don't remember_____

7. At the time you left extension youth work what were your feelings about the following:

1 = very unsatisfactory
2 = unsatisfactory
3 = undecided
4 = satisfactory
5 = very satisfactory

	very unsatisf.--------very satisf.
The program guidance you received from your county or area director.	1__2__3__4__5__
The administrative support you received from your county or area director.	1__2__3__4__5__
Program assistance you received from other agents within your county or area.	1__2__3__4__5__
Did you consider your co-workers as personal friends?	1__2__3__4__5__
The administrative support you received from your district director.	1__2__3__4__5__
The leadership provided by the state youth department.	1__2__3__4__5__
Salary you were receiving.	1__2__3__4__5__
Amount of leisure or family time you had.	1__2__3__4__5__
Program assistance you received from the state youth staff.	1__2__3__4__5__
Working relationships with the other agents in your county or area.	1__2__3__4__5__
Amount of routine tasks you were expected to perform.	1__2__3__4__5__

8. Did you think your college education provided you the academic background needed to effectively serve as an extension youth agent?

Yes_____ No_____ Don't remember_____

If your answer was No, what type of courses or experiences do you think would have been more helpful?_____

_____

9. When you were first employed as a youth agent were you working in the area of the state in which you wanted to live?

Yes_____ No_____ Don't remember_____

10. In your opinion which position in each of the following has the most prestige? (Please check one in each line.)

a.	____Youth	____Home Economics	____Same
b.	____Agriculture	____Co. or Area Director	____Same
c.	____Co. or Area Director	____Youth	____Same
d.	____Home Economics	____Agriculture	____Same
e.	____Community Development	____Co. or Area Director	____Same
f.	____Youth	____Community Development	____Same
g.	____Agriculture	____Youth	____Same
h.	____Co. or Area Director	____Home Economics	____Same
i.	____Community Development	____Agriculture	____Same
j.	____Home Economics	____Community Development	____Same

11. When you were a youth agent, did you think your opinion had any affect on policy decisions made by the administration?

Yes_____ No_____ Don't remember_____

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12. When you were a youth agent, did you think your opinion had any affect on program decisions made by the youth department?

Yes_____ No_____ Don't remember_____

13. In what school or college did you receive your under-graduate degree?

_____Agriculture

_____Home Economics

_____Education

_____Arts & Science

_____Other _____
(what school or college)

14. Did you think your previous work experience influenced your decision to leave the youth position?

Yes_____ No_____ Don't remember_____

Explain_____

_____

15. Indicate the three most important reasons which caused you to resign or change to another position within the extension division?

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____